

Abstract 111

TITLE: Among Friends: Crisis Transition Program for GLBTs

(See <http://www.dcpride.org>)

AUTHORS: John D. Kraft (Among Friends Job Support Group Facilitator)

ISSUE: Among Friends is a non-profit, incorporated ministry to GLBT persons in crisis. It provides short-term housing (3 to 6 months), a job search support group, and a peer-counseling program. This poster is presented as a model for similar local program development. The house has a permanent "house mother" and can house up to 5 additional people, while the individuals involved are working to put their lives back in order. Counseling is provided. A job search support group meets weekly to help individuals with job search issues and networking. A peer support group meets periodically to help with the "coming out" process. In addition to providing direct support to persons living with HIV/AIDS who ask the organization for assistance, these individuals are assisted in finding specific additional referral sources in the rehabilitation, medical, and social services areas.

SETTING: The housing program is located in a leased residence in Washington, DC. The support groups meet in a church in a predominantly GLBT area in Washington, DC.

PROJECT: This program was begun by a Roman Catholic priest. The organization is funded by the Combined Federal Campaign, local MCC churches, Dignity, individual contributions, small grants from HIV/AIDS service organizations, and fund raisers within the GLBT community. There is no paid staff: all are volunteers. The interracial Board of Directors and staff consist of volunteers from many disciplines, including attorney, social worker, psychologist, business, and religious organizations. The volunteers are covered by liability insurance and must sign a very detailed contract relating to their conduct with clients. Some of the volunteers/clients are HIV+.

RESULTS: No formal evaluation studies have been carried out on the program. However, informal follow-ups are made. The housing program normally is full with a small waiting list. Many people return to the job support group and recommend others to come.

LESSONS LEARNED: 1. Some of the people who use the services are suffering from clinical depression. 2. Many people in their late 40 's and in their 50's need support in searching for employment. 3. Some GLBTs who want help are afraid of exposure as to their sexual orientation. For these people, e-mail, letters, and phone calls are used. Some people with HIV will not go to an HIV clinic but instead will use a service organization like Among 5. Many individuals who have come to the job support group really seem to be looking for a discussion group on "coming out" issues. This is a good place to discuss HIV prevention strategies.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: John D. Kraft

Address: 715 Marshall Road, SW
Vienna, VA 22180-4648

Telephone: (703) 281-3948

Fax: (703) 281-3762

E-mail: jkraft715@aol.com